

"I SAW HIM, MAN! I SAW HIM PLAY!"  
"YEAH? WELL, I SAW JIM THORPE!"  
"YEAH? YOU SAW JIM THORPE JUST LIKE YOU  
GOT LAID LAST NIGHT!"  
"YEAH, I NOTICE YOU CAN HARDLY SIT DOWN!"  
"I'LL TEAR YOUR GOD DAMNED HEAD OFF!"

the combat never evolves and that's well  
and good, for they are fine fellows, we  
need them like we need the Sierra Madres  
slinking through the smog, like we need  
Willie Shoemaker legging it up on just  
one more mount, we need to forget the  
women that didn't work and the ways that  
didn't work, all the bad bets ...  
what counts is continuance, what counts  
is not noticing that the whole west side  
of America is going to keel underwater,  
and there was never any sense in having  
gardens and in sending people to  
Radcliffe.

I like to watch those fellows, they are  
like a Broadway musical, only it's not  
GUYS AND DOLLS it's GUYS AND GUYS, they  
are fine fellows, the wavering line of  
them, the most beautiful women in the  
world mean nothing to them  
because they know that only certain things  
work for certain people, and there's  
just no use wondering how it got that  
way.

I get the best Broadway musical  
every day from the best seat in the  
house and I am the critic and the  
audience and sometimes I'm on stage  
too.

I don't know where they come from  
and I don't know where they go.

the vet's ward, probably.

#### DEAD DOG

Bartowski completes a 58-yard touchdown pass  
to beat the Rams in the final minutes.  
I hear it on the radio  
it's Sunday and I'm on the way to the track  
I should make the third race.  
the Falcons hold on to win and that's good.  
I switch off the radio.



then where the Harbor Freeway branches onto  
the Pasadena

I see a dead dog up on the ramp  
he's a big one and he's stiff  
his head is crushed.

people who carry dogs in their cars  
and let them hang out --  
when those dogs fall out  
they just keep driving ...

I know how to make the tunnel  
you take the far right lane  
the other lanes back up to the left  
I glide on through

when I come out of the tunnel  
I slide back into the fast lane.

those sons of bitches and their dead  
dogs.

I get to the track at 1:20 p.m.  
take preferred parking  
find a vacant spot at F-5  
lock it

and as I'm walking between cars  
I see two men

they have broken into a car  
they are taking out the radio,  
the stereo and the speakers.  
they see me and I see them.

"don't say nothin', man!  
if you do, remember we'll see you  
again some day!"

I get inside the track  
it's four minutes to post  
third race coming up  
the crowd has bet Shameen  
with Delahousseye  
down from 4 to 2 to one.  
Song for Two has a line of 2  
and reads 3.

I rate the horses even  
bet ten win on Song for Two.

Song for Two wins the photo  
the Shoe can still ride  
and I'm \$31 ahead.

those sons of bitches and their dead  
dogs.

I lose the 4th, 5th and 6th races.  
in the 7th they bet Back'n Time down



to 3 to 5 off a 99 speed rating  
6 furlongs down at Del Mar  
but the colt is 3 years old  
going against older  
and has never gone a mile.  
I can see it turning into the stretch  
with a four length lead and getting beat  
at the wire  
by something.  
but who will do it?  
there are 6 other horses.

I put 50 place on Back'n Time  
and watch the race.  
the colt has four lengths coming into  
the stretch  
then Don F.  
the longest shot on the board  
begins to close down  
and it's tight at the wire.

they hang the photo  
we wait  
then they put up Don F.  
at 19 to one.

I get \$2.80 place  
so I make \$20  
lose the 8th  
then I'm only \$18 up.

in the 9th  
I bet ten win on Fleet Ruler  
and two win on Forecast  
then leave the track  
stand out in the parking lot  
listen to the announcer  
who is hollering  
"Forecast is in front  
and here comes Fleet Ruler  
it's Fleet Ruler and Forecast  
at the wire!"

it's evidently a photo  
I walk to my car to get out of there  
before the crowd.

I have the radio  
on the race result station.  
I'm still on the Pasadena Freeway  
when I hear the result:  
it's Forecast  
and Forecast paid \$90.70  
so  
the day wasn't quite wasted.



but later  
when I pull into the driveway  
there's the Manx cat  
with his rudimentary tail and  
his tongue hanging out.  
he refuses to move for the car  
I get out  
pick him up and  
throw him in the front seat.  
we drive into the garage  
together.

we get out  
the other two cats are waiting  
(lovers of fishheads, dreamers of  
birds)  
I open the door  
and all the cats enter  
with me

they run into the kitchen  
I notice where Dallas and San Diego are  
playing ... Danny White is at quarter for  
Dallas.  
I always liked Danny White,  
he's a gambler

I might watch a few quarters  
Sunday's a day of rest  
all important things should be forgotten .

I decide to not even feed the cats  
for a while  
Tuesday or Wednesday I'll begin  
on that childhood novel  
again.

#### TALKING TO THE BARKEEP

"correctly so," I told him,  
"I would have them  
robbing banks and selling  
drugs ...  
I'll have another vodka-  
7 ...."

"correctly so," said the  
barkeep mixing the  
drink, "I'd have them  
collecting garbage  
or running for congress  
or teaching  
biology ...."